

The ICCA Consortium stands with the Wet'suwet'en

Posted by Joan Russow

Wednesday, 30 January 2019 19:05 -

We submit this message to you as a demonstration of our support and solidarity as you uphold and defend your unceded, ancestral homeland. The Wet'suwet'en have the right to live in balance with their lands and waters and have a responsibility to defend their culture, language, and livelihood. The ICCA Consortium is an international association under Swiss law uniting federations and organizations of indigenous peoples, local communities and civil society organisations concerned with the appropriate recognition of the territories and areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities (ICCAs) throughout the world. We are a partner organization of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP GEF SGP) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Our direct Members and Honorary members span over seventy-five countries.

The ICCA Consortium's worldwide engagement is part of the global recognition of the importance of indigenous peoples' and local community conservation practices to achieve global conservation goals and targets. This recognition is enshrined in the Convention on Biological Diversity, which asks Parties to "recognize the role of indigenous and local community conserved areas in biodiversity conservation and diversification of governance types"(COP 10/ X 31), a role considered fundamental to reach Aichi Biodiversity Targets 11 and 18, among others. Various other international agreements and best practice guidelines—including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples—lend support to the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities to manage and conserve their territories according to their own values, institutions, and practices. Such agreements and best practice guidelines also recognise indigenous peoples' and community conservation as compatible with, and actually promoting, local sustainable livelihoods and poverty eradication efforts. Drawing lessons from numerous successful examples and the experience of problems round the world, the ICCA Consortium works to support understanding and appropriate practice in the integration of conservation, sustainable livelihoods and the respect of human and indigenous peoples' rights.

The ICCA Consortium is adding its voice to the Unist'ot'en pledge:

The Unist'ot'en camp, a permanent Indigenous re-occupation of Wet'suwet'en land in northern B.C., is currently on high alert. Coastal GasLink Pipeline has applied for an injunction, as well as served notice for a civil lawsuit to claim financial damages for "occupying, obstructing, blocking, physically impeding or delaying access" against Unist'ot'en camp on their own unceded territory. Instead of recognizing the collective hereditary leadership of the Wet'suwet'en, the legal notices target two individuals Freda Huson and Warner Naziel.

On December 2018, B.C. Supreme Court issued an interim court injunction granting Coastal GasLink the go-ahead to proceed with their fracked gas pipeline on unceded Wet'suwet'en

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territory. Through this interim injunction, RCMP forcibly and violently invaded the Wet'suwet'en Access Point on Gitdumden territory, which was announced in the Wet'suwet'en feast hall with the support of all Hereditary Chiefs present.

Coastal Gaslink's application for an injunction will be heard on January 31. The Wet'suwet'en nation is enacting their laws and jurisdiction on their territories against the violent resource extraction authorized by the federal and provincial governments. Let Unist'ot'en Camp know they are not alone.

1. WE COMMEND the courage and vision of Unist'ot'en Camp.

2. WE ARE WATCHING across the province, country and internationally.

3. WE DENOUNCE any attempt by Coastal GasLink Pipeline, federal government, provincial government or RCMP to interfere in the rights of the Unist'ot'en to occupy, manage or maintain their lands.

4. WE DEMAND that any and all actions taken by the federal and provincial government, industry, and policing agencies must be consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Anuk Nu'at'en (Wet'suwet'en laws) and collective Title.

5. WE PLEDGE support to the frontline land defenders of Unist'ot'en Camp and affirm the collective hereditary governance of the Wet'suwet'en who are enforcing Wet'suwet'en laws on their unceded lands.